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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Letter dated 27 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith* the Appeal to the peoples and States of the world and international organizations by the inhabitants of the town of Khodjaly in connection with the sixth anniversary of the genocide in Khodjaly.

I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter and the above-mentioned Appeal as an official document of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 10.

(Signed): S. EIVAZOVA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* The attachment is circulated as received in the language of submission only.

Annex

Appeal
to the peoples and States of the world and international organizations by the inhabitants of the town of Khodjaly in connection with the sixth anniversary of the genocide in Khodjaly

Six years have passed since the Khodjaly genocide - one of the bloodiest crimes in the history of mankind.

The date 26 February was proclaimed the Day of the Khodjaly Genocide and National Mourning by a decision of the Milli Mejlis (parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan. On the orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a minute of silence is declared every year on 26 February at 17.00 hours in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan to honour the memory of the victims of the Khodjaly genocide. All international organizations have been informed of this. The Azerbaijani people spends this day every year in profound mourning and sorrow.

On this day six years ago, Armenian separatists, armed with the most modern equipment, which was provided to them free of charge by their patrons abroad, and with the direct assistance of the 366th motor-rifle regiment of the former USSR, stationed in Khankendi, committed an unthinkable, brutal act. Having razed the town of Khodjaly, they mercilessly destroyed hundreds of helpless, innocent people. They did not spare even children, women or old people. As a result of the atrocities by the criminal military units, 613 inhabitants of Khodjaly became victims and 487 disabled. From among the peaceful population of Khodjaly, 1,275 persons were taken hostages and subjected to unprecedented Armenian oppression, insults and humiliation. To this day, the fate of 150 persons is unknown. Among the victims, there were 106 women and 63 children. Seventy-five of the disabled were boys and girls who had not reached adulthood. Six families were totally wiped out; 25 children lost both parents and 130 children lost one of their parents.

In this crime, 56 persons were killed with particular cruelty and savagery. They were burned alive, beheaded and scalped; the eyes of children were cut out and the stomachs of pregnant women were slashed open with bayonets. The corpses were subjected to outrages that cannot be described in words.

In general, the Khodjaly tragedy, which demonstrated the aim to destroy the Azerbaijani people, is a result of systematic genocide by Armenian nationalists. Armenian nationalist-separatists, conducting a policy of ethnic cleansing and committing acts of mass bloodshed from time to time, expelled Azerbaijanis from their historical homeland. After violently expelling the last Azerbaijani from Armenia, they began the occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan. The fact that the civilized world community did not attempt to prevent this savagery and failed to characterize in political and legal terms the brutal actions and bloody aggression by the Armenians as an act against humanity inspired them to be even more merciless in carrying out their intentions to create the State of "Greater Armenia" by seizing our territory. As a consequence, those guilty of the Khodjaly genocide committed further crimes: 20 per cent of our territory was occupied; and more than a million refugees were forced to live in intolerable conditions. And this was a crime directed not only against Azerbaijan, but against all mankind and humaneness.

The horror endured will remain forever in the memory of all our people, including the memory of the people of Khodjaly who by chance survived this repeated slaughter of the twentieth century. For six years now, we have been appealing to the peoples and States of the world, international organizations and all people who believe in the Most High. We have one wish - that the world community, demonstrating that it is not indifferent to human pain and that it relates to all peoples and nations with equal mercy and objectivity, condemn the Khodjaly genocide and now, in achievement of the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh problem, put an end to the obstinate behaviour of the aggressor.

Forthrightly supporting the desire and determination of the President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliev, to end the war through peaceful means, we express the hope that, for the tranquillity of our radiant world, so that never again anywhere in the world will the mass destruction of people be permitted, you, believing that justice is paramount, will clearly condemn the crime of those who committed the Khodjaly genocide. We believe that, if this is done, the Khodjaly genocide will be the last tragedy that people will hear and see.

February 22, 1998

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